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REED & EBERLE LLP
800 MENLO AVENUE, SUITE 210
MENLO PARK CA 94025

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In re Application of
Evan C. Unger et al
Application No. 09/912,609
Filed: July 25, 2001
Attorney Docket No. UNGR-1599

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: **OFFICE OF PETITIONS**
: **DECISION ON PETITION**
: **UNDER 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3)**
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This is a decision on the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3), filed July 3, 2003, to accept an unintentionally delayed claim under 35 U.S.C. § 120 for the benefit of priority to prior-filed nonprovisional Application No. 09/703,484, filed October 31, 2000, set forth in the amendment filed concurrently with the instant petition.

The petition is **DISMISSED**.

A petition for acceptance of a claim for late priority under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) is only applicable to those applications filed on or after November 29, 2000. Further, the petition is appropriate only after the expiration of the period specified in 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(ii). In addition, the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) must be accompanied by:

- (1) the reference required by 35 U.S.C. § 120 and 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(i) of the prior-filed application(s), unless previously submitted;¹
- (2) the surcharge set forth in § 1.17(t); and
- (3) a statement that the entire delay between the date the claim was due under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(ii) and the date the claim was filed was unintentional. The Commissioner may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional.

¹ Any nonprovisional application or international application designating the United States of America claiming the benefit of one or more prior-filed copending applications or international applications designating the United States of America must contain or be amended to contain a reference (amendment to the first line of the specification following the title or in an application data sheet (ADS) to each such prior-filed application, identifying it by application number (consisting of the series code and serial number) or international application number and international filing date and indicating the relationship of the applications. Cross references to other related applications may be made when appropriate (see § 1.14).

The reference to the above-noted, prior-filed application was not included in the manner specified in 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(i) (i.e., in an ADS or in an amendment to the first sentence following the title of the specification) or filed within the period specified in 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(ii).

A reference to add the above-noted, prior-filed application on page one following the first sentence of the specification has been included in an amendment filed on July 3, 2003. However, the amendment is not acceptable as drafted since it improperly incorporates by reference the prior-filed application. Petitioner's attention is directed to Dart Industries v. Banner, 636 F.2d 684, 207 USPQ 273 (C.A.D.C. 1980), where the court drew a distinction between a permissible 35 U.S.C. § 120 statement and the impermissible introduction of new matter by way of incorporation by reference in a 35 U.S.C. § 120 statement. The court specifically stated:

Section 120 merely provides a mechanism whereby an application becomes entitled to benefit of the filing date of an earlier application disclosing the same subject matter. Common subject matter must be disclosed, in both applications, either specifically or by an express incorporation-by-reference of prior disclosed subject matter. Nothing in section 120 itself operates to carry forward any disclosure from an earlier application. In re deSeversky, supra at 674, 177 USPQ at 146-147. Section 120 contains no magical disclosure-augmenting powers able to pierce new matter barriers. It cannot, therefore, "limit" the absolute and express prohibition against new matter contained in section 251.

In order for the incorporation by reference statement to be effective as a proper safeguard against the omission of a portion of a prior application, the incorporation by reference statement must be included in the specification-as-filed, or in an amendment specifically referred to in an oath or declaration executing the application. See In re de Seversky, supra. Note also MPEP 201.06(c).

Accordingly, before the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) can be granted, a substitute amendment² deleting the incorporation by reference statement to Application No. 09/703,484, along with a renewed petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3), is required.

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

By mail: Mail Stop PETITIONS
 Commissioner for Patents
 Post Office Box 1450
 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

²Note 37 CFR 1.121

By hand: Customer Window located at:

2011 South Clark Place
Crystal Plaza Two Lobby
Room 1B03
Arlington, VA 22202

By fax: (703) 872-9306
ATTN: Office of Petitions

Telephone inquiries concerning this decision should be directed to the undersigned at (703) 305-8859.



Karen Creasy
Petitions Examiner
Office of Petitions
Office of the Deputy Commissioner
for Patent Examination Policy